

## **Field Report**

Home Institution: Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA, USA

Host Institution: Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, Villach, Austria

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Period: May 10, 2021 – August 13, 2021

### **General impression of my research stays abroad**

It was an honor to study in Austria as an exchange researcher during the pandemic. While I spent more time and effort on preparing for the trip, such as waiting a long time to get a valid visa and finding a hotel for self-quarantine upon arrival, all the components of my experience were unforgettable moments. Despite there being travel restrictions for me at first, they were lifted after being there a couple weeks, allowing me to enjoy and learn about the cultures of Austria and its surrounding countries. While conducting my research, I was able to share opinions with new colleagues, acquire a Vienna crime dataset from the Police department, and discover patterns about street lightning and nightlife.

### **Quality of the host institution**

Carinthia University of Applied Sciences has at least four classrooms equipped with various software for research, allowing me to conduct my research smoothly. In addition, through bi-weekly meetings with professors, I received high quality feedback on my progress as well as suggestions for improvement. When I thought my research could benefit from a field trip to Vienna, professors shared a lot of useful information with me, which was extremely helpful.

## **Contacts within the host institution, inclusion in the organization**

Before my project started, the school organized an online orientation for the exchange students. Since it was held over Zoom, I was able to attend the meeting and get information even though I was in the US. Alexandra Maurer from the International Relations Office even created an online video chat room, Kumospace, to socialize. Ms. Maurer also created a group chat on WhatsApp and set up a group in Microsoft Team to share information and communicate with each other. She was very nice and helped me a lot while I was at the host institution. She even helped me with grocery shopping during my self-quarantine upon arrival in Austria. While abroad, I also made a good friend in Villach, Vanessa, who originally planned to study in the US afterwards, but ultimately decided not to because of COVID-19. While in Villach, we had a great time together both academically and personally. When the lockdown was lifted, we traveled to different cities in Austria together. In addition to this, thanks to my good friends and professors, I was able to make many memorable moments.

## **Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellows**

The Marshall Plan Scholarship provides such a great opportunity to study abroad. One of the biggest benefits of this scholarship is that you can study and conduct your own research abroad, especially when it is difficult to travel due to the pandemic. I will never forget the good times that I spent in Villach, the wonderful natural environment, and the friendly people I met. Thus, I highly recommend this scholarship for everyone. Another small recommendation, if you are applying to Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, I would recommend looking for a house in the city center rather than a dormitory near the university. The facilities in the dormitory are very poor, and there are no places to buy groceries nearby. Only a few buses connect the city center to the school, only running every 30 minutes on weekdays and every hour on weekends. Therefore, I would recommend finding other accommodations in the city center if possible.

